

III.B.1.b

MEMO TO: Mayor Rosemarie Ives and the Redmond City Council

FROM: Rob Odle, Director, Planning and Community Development, 425-556-2417
Lori Peckol, Policy Planning Manager, 425-556-2411
Terry Marpert, Principal Planner, 425-556-2428

DATE: October 2, 2007

SUBJECT: *TRANSIT NOW BRIEFING*

On October 2, King County Metro staff will make a presentation to the Mayor and City Council on new transit service coming to Redmond and the Eastside as part of *Transit Now*. A second piece of *Transit Now* is a Service Partnership grant being pursued by the City of Redmond. The presentation by Metro staff is for advisory purposes only; no City Council action is needed.

***Transit Now* Background**

On November 7, 2006, the voters of King County approved a sales tax increase of 0.1% as the means to fund *Transit Now*. *Transit Now* planning is underway, with new service starting this year, and with plans to increase system-wide Metro transit service by approximately 590,000 new transit service hours (added to the approximately 3.3 million transit service hours currently provided by Metro). The allocation of these new service hours is to be divided among the three Metro transit service areas as follows: North King County/Seattle – 20%, South King County – 40%, and East King County – 40%. The allocation of service hours according to these percentages was approved by the King County Council several years ago.

The attached *Transit Now* brochure (Attachment A) is a progress report on the first year of *Transit Now* and describes the four primary types of transit service that are funded as part of this program: (1) RapidRide, (2) improvements to current service, (3) new service for growing areas, and (4) service partnerships.

Eastside RapidRide

Currently, Metro is working with the Cities of Redmond and Bellevue to develop a bus rapid transit (BRT) line, known as Eastside RapidRide, from Downtown Redmond to Downtown Bellevue through Overlake and Crossroads. This BRT line is one of five funded by *Transit Now* and is scheduled to begin operations in 2011. BRT is a streamlined, enhanced bus service targeted for some of King County's most heavily used transit corridors.

As part of developing the BRT line, Metro is also working with the cities to establish the Eastside RapidRide Advisory Panel, comprised of Redmond and Bellevue community members, to advise the county about routing alternatives (including 152nd Avenue NE versus 156th Avenue

NE), bus stop locations, and other RapidRide issues. The application process is complete, and the 22 candidates listed on Attachment B have been appointed by Metro. Of these 22 members,

- Five live in Downtown Redmond, two live in Overlake, and two others are other Redmond residents;
- Five work for Microsoft;
- Two represent properties in Overlake, and one represents properties in both Overlake and Downtown; and
- One each is a member of the Redmond Planning Commission, the Redmond Arts Commission, and the Downtown Redmond Parking Stakeholders Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Panel is scheduled to meet approximately six times over the next six months, including two meetings scheduled for October and one or two scheduled for November. Three outreach events will be held in January 2008 in locations throughout the community. The Advisory Panel will conclude its meetings in February 2008.

One of the key issues to be considered by the Advisory Panel is routing alternatives for the Eastside RapidRide. From Crossroads to Overlake, the BRT alignment as initially proposed by Metro would use only 156th Avenue NE between NE 8th Street and NE 40th Street. Redmond staff has proposed an alternate alignment that would use 156th Avenue NE from NE 8th Street to NE 24th Street, go westbound on NE 24th Street, northbound on 152nd Avenue NE to NE 31st Street and then continue on 156th Avenue NE to NE 40th Street. The 152nd Avenue NE alignment would better serve the Overlake Village shopping area and was supported by the public at the Overlake Neighborhood Plan November 2006 open house and follow-up surveys. Part of the process of the next few months will include evaluation of these two alternatives.

Transit Now Service Partnership

City staff is also working on securing a grant to add more transit service through a financial partnership between Redmond, neighboring jurisdictions, local employers and Metro as part of *Transit Now*. Metro Route 269, which serves Overlake, Southeast Redmond, Sammamish and Issaquah, is under consideration as a route that could receive a significant increase in transit service hours, thus improving mobility within Redmond, while providing better connections to the other cities.

The partnership would increase peak-hour Route 269 service from one bus every 30 minutes to one bus every 20 minutes. The cost of the added transit service hours would be split, with Metro paying two-thirds of the service cost with *Transit Now* funds and the partners (City of Redmond, Sammamish, Issaquah and Redmond employers) paying for the remaining one-third of the cost. City funding will come from Business Tax/Transportation Improvements (BTTI) revenue that Council approved for use toward shuttle and transit services that benefit the business community.

Mayor Rosemarie Ives and the Redmond City Council
RE: *TRANSIT NOW* BRIEFING
October 2, 2007
Page 3

Attachment A: *Transit Now* Year 1 Report

Attachment B: Appointed Eastside RapidRide Advisory Panel Members

O:\Terry M\King County Metro\070927 transit now memo to cc for oct 2, 2007.doc

Expanding transit service in King County

In November 2006, King County voters passed *Transit Now*, a ballot measure proposed by King County Executive Ron Sims to expand Metro Transit service by 15 to 20 percent over the next decade.

The first improvements were rolled out as part of the February 2007 service change, with 16,000 annual service hours added to 10 existing bus routes. More new hours were scheduled for the June and September service changes, for a total increase of 37,000 annual service hours in the first year of *Transit Now*.

Longer-range improvements will include the creation of new bus rapid transit service in five busy corridors, more bus service on high-ridership routes and in growing residential areas, and improvements to Metro's existing Rideshare and paratransit services. To support this increased service, Metro will add new buses to its fleet and replace aging buses over the next 10 years. Many of the new buses will be hybrid diesel-electric coaches with air conditioning, security cameras, "SmartCard" fareboxes, and the latest communication systems.

Why expand Metro service

The county's need for transit service is growing along with its population and economy. Over the next 10 years, the county is expected to add 250,000 new jobs and welcome more than 150,000 new residents. Without increases in transit, this growth would add significantly to the traffic congestion we already face.

Increasing the use of transit will also help King County combat global warming and support livable, healthy communities. Metro's increasing use of green vehicles such as electric trolley and hybrid diesel-electric buses, and cleaner-burning fuels such as biodiesel and Ultra Low Sulfur diesel, add to the environmental advantage of combining many riders in a single vehicle. Metro's wide range of transportation alternatives, including vanpools, carpools, and Access paratransit—and its support of choices such as shared cars, biking and walking—make transit a powerful tool to help reduce pollution and support active, healthy lifestyles.

Transit Now funding

The service improvements under *Transit Now* are being funded through a one-tenth of one percent increase in the sales tax in King County. This increase is expected to cost the average household in King County an estimated \$25 in 2007.

We'll Get You There

Metro offers a variety of transportation options and supports alternatives such as bike riding and the water taxi across Elliott Bay. Having choices helps you get where you need to go in a way that best fits your lifestyle—and that's good for everyone. For more information, visit Metro Online (<http://transit.metrokc.gov/>) and follow the link to "Travel Options" or call one of the numbers listed below.

Rider Information: 206-553-3000

- Bus schedules, routes, and trip planning
- Park-and-Rides
- Bike facilities
- Water Taxi

Rideshare: 206-625-4500

- Carpool
- Ridematch
- VanPool
- VanShare

Accessible Services:

206-263-3113

Transit Now service improvements

The new service will be concentrated in five key areas:

- 1 Bringing new bus rapid transit service, under the name **RapidRide**, to five busy corridors;
- 2 Offering more all-day, two-way service to high-ridership routes that connect residential, business, and recreational centers;
- 3 Providing new bus service for growing residential areas;
- 4 Forming partnerships with major employers and cities to add new service in rapidly expanding employment centers; and
- 5 Additional improvements such as expanded ride-share and paratransit services in King County.

1 RapidRide

Under *Transit Now*, Metro is developing RapidRide, a bus rapid transit service that will provide frequent, fast, and reliable bus service in certain major arterial corridors. New buses, upgraded passenger waiting areas, synchronized traffic signals, and real-time bus arrival signs are just some of the features that will distinguish this service in the following five corridors:

The hallmarks of RapidRide service

At full implementation, RapidRide will feature:

- Frequent, all-day service: a target of every 10 minutes most of the time and at least every 15 minutes during non-peak hours;
- Transit stations at high-ridership and high-transfer locations with real-time bus arrival signs and enhanced shelters; and
- High-capacity, low-emission hybrid buses with low floors designed for fast boarding and rider comfort.

- **Aurora RapidRide** — Aurora Avenue N (SR 99) between Shoreline and downtown Seattle
 - **Ballard/Uptown RapidRide** — Ballard to downtown Seattle along 15th Avenue NW and W Mercer Place
 - **Bel-Red RapidRide** — Bellevue to Redmond on NE Eighth Street and 156th Avenue NE via Crossroads and Overlake
 - **Pacific Highway South RapidRide** — SeaTac to Federal Way on Pacific Highway S (SR 99)
 - **West Seattle RapidRide** — West Seattle to downtown Seattle using the downtown Seattle transit tunnel or Third Avenue
- Metro estimates the cost of implementing RapidRide at approximately \$160 million, including roadway improvements, passenger facilities and amenities, and new buses. This funding will be secured through a combination of the *Transit Now* sales tax increase and support from federal and state grants.

What's happening now

Metro's current work on RapidRide includes:

- Working with cities to define the service routing and roadway

improvements to be provided in each of the five corridors;

- Taking inventory of existing transit service in those corridors, including bus stop locations and the speed and reliability of existing transit service;
- Doing traffic studies in the affected areas;
- Working with consultants and customer focus groups to design the passenger amenities and other features of RapidRide vehicles and facilities; and
- Forming community advisory committees in preparation for public outreach in early 2008.

2 More service for high-ridership routes

With *Transit Now* funding, Metro will enhance existing service to produce a network of core high-ridership routes with all-day, two-way bus service connecting residential, business, and recreational centers throughout the county. The target frequency for service on these routes is every 15 minutes, seven days a week. Ridership studies show that when passengers can count on service being available at all times of day, even commuter ridership increases.

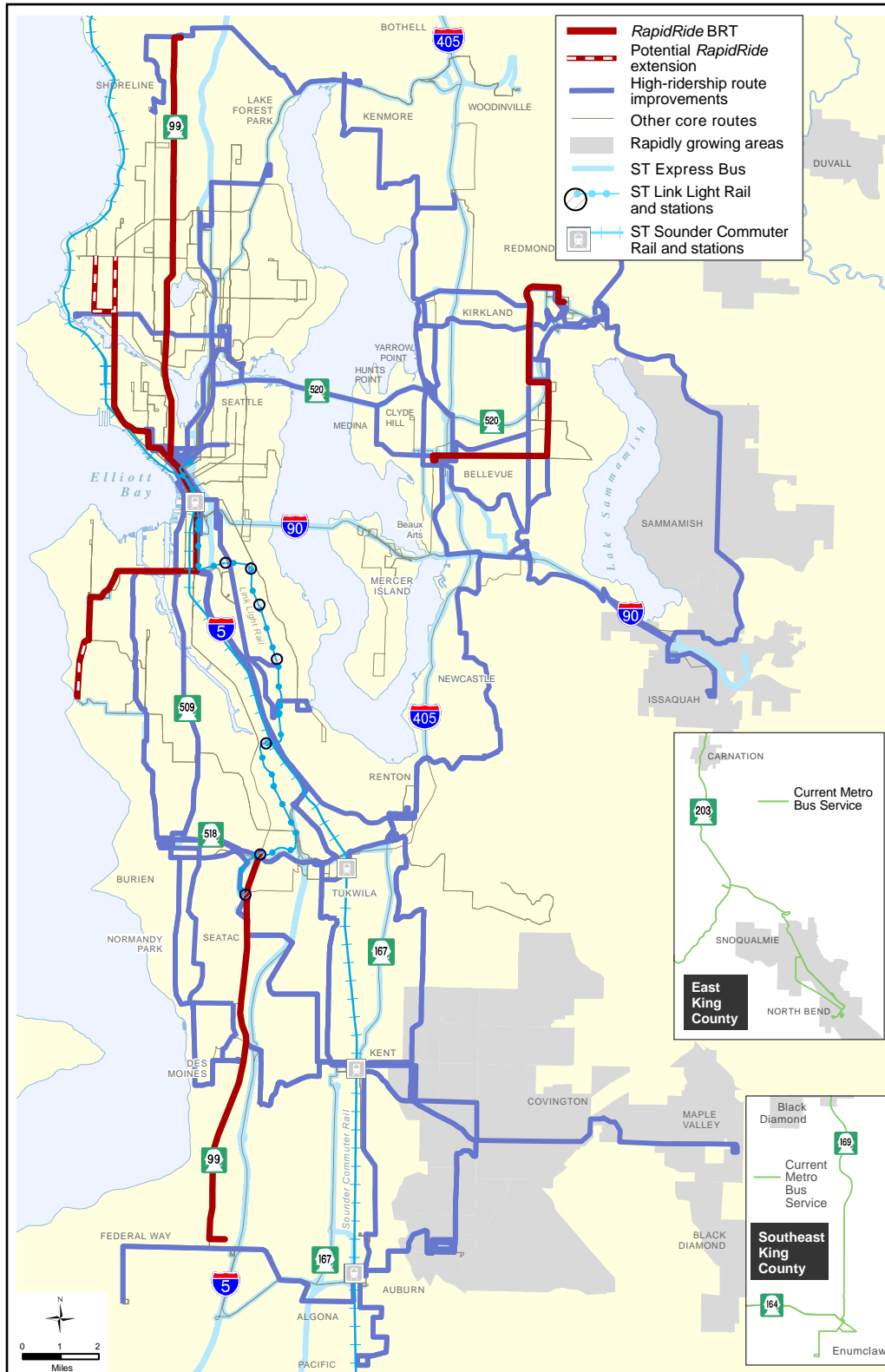
The service improvements designed to create this network will be tailored to specific needs in specific areas.

What's happening now

By the end of 2007, Metro will have increased service in 13 of the 30 high-ridership corridors identified for improvements under *Transit Now*. The earliest improvements

continued on page 4

This map, based on Metro Transit's analysis of current ridership and future population and employment trends, illustrates how service improvements from *Transit Now* will be spread throughout the region. Exactly when improvements will be made along which corridors will be decided only after a thorough process combining research, analysis, and extensive public outreach for major route changes.



RapidRide BRT:

- Aurora RapidRide
- Ballard/Uptown RapidRide
- Bel-Red RapidRide
- Pacific Highway South RapidRide
- West Seattle RapidRide

High-ridership routes:

- Network of all-day central Eastside routes with 15-minute frequency
- South King County all-day 15-30-minute frequency route network
- Improved cross-town services within Seattle

Rapidly growing areas:

New peak service or addition of midday service to rapidly growing residential areas

Service partnerships:

Additional services to urban employment centers with high potential for matching resources

continued from page 2

all focused on increasing service during off-peak hours, and by mid-2008 some peak-hour improvements are scheduled to be made as well. Metro's first installment of 22 new hybrid diesel-electric buses, which will support further service increases, is scheduled to arrive in mid-2008.

3 New service for growing areas

The suburban areas of King County have grown rapidly in the past 20 years. With *Transit Now*, Metro will increase service to these growing residential areas by adding peak-hour-only service in some areas that currently have limited or no service and by adding midday service in some areas that currently have peak service only. Some of the areas in East and South King County that have been identified for possible new or expanded service include:

- Covington
- Duvall
- Issaquah
- Maple Valley
- Redmond Ridge
- Sammamish
- Snoqualmie

What's happening now

Metro will begin outreach later this year with elected officials and local jurisdictions to identify areas eligible for new service. Once the areas have been identified, Metro will work with communities to determine the specific services that will be implemented in those areas using a yet-to-be-adopted phasing plan for service startup.

4 Service partnerships

Transit Now sets aside resources for partnerships with major employers

and cities, potentially leveraging millions in additional funding from other sources to add new service in rapidly expanding employment centers.

What's happening now

The first service partnership with Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center has been approved to begin in fall 2007, adding 63 new trips on existing Metro routes 25 and 75. The King County Council has approved a set of priority criteria for selecting partnership proposals, along with a process and schedule for seeking future partners. A Call for Projects will be issued in mid-2007 for projects to begin in 2008 and beyond.

5 Additional improvements

In addition to the four key improvement areas described above, *Transit Now* includes funding to improve Metro's non fixed-route services by the following means:

- For users with disabilities who are not served by the Access paratransit program, provide service through the Community Access Transportation Program;
- For non-disabled users outside Metro's fixed-route coverage area, make enhancements that double participation in the VanPool, VanShare, and ride-match programs; and
- Within Metro's fixed-route coverage areas, improve non-motorized access to transit.

What's happening now

Expansion of Access paratransit service into some areas that are not currently served is scheduled

to begin in September 2007, and planning is underway for bus stop enhancements that will allow more seniors and riders with disabilities to use regular bus service.

Outreach is being conducted to promote Metro's vanpool and vanshare services and RideshareOnline to smaller employers in King County.

Metro's fleet is being equipped with three-bike racks to replace the two-bike racks on all buses. In 2007, all buses serving State Route 520 will have the new racks, with the remainder of the fleet to be equipped by the end of 2008.

Schedule

The *Transit Now* ordinance (#15582) specifies that the funded service improvements are to be brought on line over the next 10 years. The first of these improvements were made in February 2007, with more scheduled for June and September. A phasing and implementation plan for the remaining improvements will be established as Metro updates its Six-Year Transit Development Plan in 2007.

Contact us

You can learn more about *Transit Now* by visiting King County's Web site at www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/transitnow.

If you have questions or comments about *Transit Now*, please call the Metro Transit message line at 206-684-1146.

Alternate Formats Available

206-263-6482 TTY Relay: 711

Attachment B: Appointed Eastside RapidRide Advisory Panel Members

Member	Experience
Linda Abe	Downtown Bellevue developer
Josh Benaloh	Overlake resident; Microsoft employee
Sue Benton	Crossroads Mall property manager
William Biggs	Group Health executive
Jill Boyle	Downtown Bellevue resident
Cheryl Valdene Claux	Downtown Redmond resident
Dave Elliott	Transit Advisory Committee liaison
Lori Ferrin	Hopelink transportation ombudsman
Roman Frillarte	Downtown Redmond resident; Downtown Redmond Parking Workgroup member
Thomas Hinman	Overlake resident; Redmond Planning Commissioner
Goi Holliday	Redmond Silver Cloud Inn sales manager; Redmond Arts Commissioner
David Johnson	Grass Lawn resident; former Eastside Metro Sounding Board member; Microsoft employee
Leslie Leber	YWCA employee
Helen O'Boyle	Downtown Bellevue resident; Microsoft employee
Don Riggs	East Bellevue resident
CaLinda Roth	Southeast Redmond resident; youth advocate
Anne Scroggs	Downtown Redmond resident
Susan Sieveke	Bellevue resident; senior advocate
Elizabeth Stoner	Overlake Fashion Plaza property manager
Jeannie Vahlsing	East Bellevue resident
Michael Walsh	Downtown Redmond resident; Microsoft employee
Maribel Young	Downtown Redmond resident; Microsoft employee

O:\Terry M\King County Metro\070927 Transit Now briefing memo to cc 10-2-07 attachment B.doc